

## Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 R

DRAFTED BY NEA:ALATHERTONJR:MAR

APPROVED BY THE SECRETARY (PER SECTO 1008)

S/S: RKUCHEL

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 014190

NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, LE, SY, IS, US

SUBJECT: LEBANESE SITUATION

FOR CHARGE FROM SECRETARY

1. DURING MEETING WITH ME JANUARY 19, DINITZ PASSED ALONG  
THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE ABOUT LEBANON FROM FOREIGN MINISTER  
ALLON:

2. "OUR INTELLIGENCE INDICATES THAT IN THE LAST TWO DAYS  
TWO BATTALIONS OF PLA HAVE ENTERED LEBANON. ONE IS A  
BATTALION OF THE SHITIN BRIGADE WHICH WENT TO TRIPOLI.  
ANOTHER IS A BATTALION OF KHADASIA BRIGADE; THIS WENT INTO  
SAKHLE. OUR INTELLIGENCE IS THAT TONIGHT, THAT IS AT THE  
PRESENT MOMENT, A THIRD BATTALION, ALSO OF THE KHADASIA  
BRIGADE, WILL ENTER INTO SAKHLE. WE ALSO HAVE INFORMATION  
THAT ANOTHER BATTALION OF THE SAME BRIGADE IS PREPARING  
TO ENTER. ON TOP OF THIS, INSTRUCTIONS HAVE BEEN GIVEN FOR  
MOBILIZATION OF THE RESERVE FORCES OF THE PLA. ALL THESE  
FORCES ARE GENERALLY UNDER THE OPERATIONAL CONTROL OF THE

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SYRIAN GENERAL STAFF. THIS IS ON TOP OF THE 2,000 SAIQA

WHICH ARE ALREADY IN LEBANON. WE EXPRESS OUR CONCERN AT THIS DEVELOPMENT AND REGARD IT AS THE FIRST STAGE OF

A SYRIAN INCURSION INTO LEBANON. THE FOREIGN MINISTER DOES NOT EXCLUDE THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE SYRIANS WILL BRING IN ADDITIONAL BATTALIONS, INCLUDING REGULAR SYRIAN BATTALIONS UNDER PALESTINIAN FLAGS, AS THEY DID IN JORDAN IN 1970. OUR ESTIMATE IS THAT THESE BATTALIONS CAN OVERRUN THE CHRISTIANS AT THE MOMENT. HE WOULD LIKE TO KNOW IF THE SECRETARY HAS ANY COMMENT ON THIS."

3. YOU SHOULD CONTACT THE FOREIGN MINISTER AND TELL HIM THAT OUR OWN INFORMATION GENERALLY ACCORDS WITH WHAT HE PROVIDED TO US THROUGH AMBASSADOR DINITZ ABOUT MOVEMENT OF PLA UNITS INTO LEBANON. WE HAVE NO REPEAT NO INDICATIONS OF ANY PLANNED MOVEMENTS OF REGULAR SYRIAN ARMY UNITS, AND OUR PRESENT ESTIMATE IS THAT CHRISTIAN FORCES ARE NOT LIKELY TO BE OVERRUN BY ADDITION OF THESE PLA BATTALIONS. WE AGREE, HOWEVER, THAT THIS IS A SERIOUS TURN OF EVENTS AND THAT LEBANESE SITUATION IS BECOMING INCREASINGLY DANGEROUS.

4. IN LIGHT OF THIS DEVELOPMENT, WE ARE INSTRUCTING AMBASSADOR MURPHY TO EXPRESS OUR GREAT CONCERN TO SYRIAN GOVERNMENT AND TO WARN SYRIANS AGAINST UNILATERAL INTERVENTION IN LEBANESE SITUATION. WE WILL ALSO BE UNDERTAKING EXCHANGES WITH INTERESTED GOVERNMENTS THROUGH DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS TO REAFFIRM IMPORTANCE OF ENCOURAGING LEBANESE FACTIONS TO WORK FOR A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT WHICH WILL REQUIRE SOME ACCOMMODATION ON ALL SIDES OF THE LEBANESE CONFLICT. MEANWHILE, WE MUST STRESS AGAIN THE IMPORTANCE OF MAXIMUM RESTRAINT ON ISRAEL'S PART. WE KNOW THAT ISRAELIS ARE SENSITIVE TO EXTREME DELICACY OF THE SITUATION, WHICH IS FURTHER COMPLICATED BY INTER-ARAB TENSIONS. IT IS OF UTMOST IMPORTANCE TO EVALUATE CAREFULLY THE SIGNIFICANCE AND IMPACT OF ANY MOVES, POLITICAL OR MILITARY, THAT MAY BE MADE BY SYRIA OR OTHER ARABS AND TO AVOID ANY PRECIPITATE REACTIONS WHICH COULD FURTHER EXACERBATE THINGS. WE HAVE TAKEN A FIRM PUBLIC STAND AGAINST OUTSIDE INTERVENTION IN LEBANON AND WILL CONTINUE TO DO SO. WE  
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WILL CONTINUE TO WATCH LEBANESE SITUATION AND REACTIONS OF OTHERS TO IT MOST CAREFULLY AND WANT TO STAY IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH ISRAELIS DURING THIS PERIOD. WE EXPECT TO BE CONSULTED BEFORE ANY STEPS ARE TAKEN THAT BASICALLY CHANGE THE SITUATION. SISCO

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